



# San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**NEIGHBORHOOD PROSECUTOR AND  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROSECUTOR SHARE HONOR AS  
“PROSECUTOR OF THE YEAR”  
*CITY ATTORNEY MAKES ANNOUNCEMENT AT CITY COUNCIL MEETING TODAY***

**San Diego, CA:** Prosecutor Chandani Sil Flinn took-on the “johns” in the Mid-City community and silenced rowdy college students partying in the San Diego State University area. Meanwhile, her colleague, Deputy City Attorney Judy Taschner, was putting-away domestic violence and child abusers and holding parents accountable for their habitually truant children. Both prosecutors in the Criminal Division of the City Attorney’s Office are crime fighters who spend countless hours empowering communities and improving community members’ quality of life. This year, Flinn and Taschner share the honor of “Prosecutor of the Year” in the City Attorney’s Office.

“Without question, Chandani Flinn and Judy Taschner deserve the greatest possible recognition. They are shining stars amidst a team of incredibly talented prosecutors in the City Attorney’s Office,” said City Attorney Gwinn.

Deputy City Attorney Flinn’s leadership skills are evident in the crime-fighting programs she has developed. In 2000, she was assigned to the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit [NPU]. Founded by City Attorney Gwinn, NPU is a cutting edge crime-fighting program designed to improve the quality of life in San Diego’s neighborhoods. Flinn’s first NPU assignment was in the Mid-City Community, which was plagued with prostitution. She created a task force of law enforcement and community members who came up with “outside-the-box” crime-fighting tools to address the epidemic problems caused by prostitution. Deputy City Attorney Flinn worked with the community to set up the “Prostitution Impact Panel” [PIP]. PIP is an aggressive program that holds johns accountable for their criminal behavior. PIP requires convicted johns to answer directly to the community by hearing from former prostitutes and residents. Johns learn how prostitution adversely affects the

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lives of prostitutes and residents and how it endangers the johns themselves. PIP is a resounding success; no one who has attended PIP is a repeat offender. PIP has proven to be a creative alternative to simply imposing fines or incarceration.

Another highlight of Flinn's service is her success in helping residents living near San Diego State University reclaim their neighborhood. SDSU-area residents have been subjected for years to out-of-control college-student parties. "Chandani worked closely with officers and even came out at night to the command post that the police department had set-up," said Lt. Tom Orden of the San Diego Police Department. "She ensured we got the necessary elements for successful prosecution and ensured that violators were charged. As a result of her efforts, we have a viable and effective system in place that residents know will now provide them relief after so many years."

During the City Attorney's recent budget presentation to the Mayor and City Council, a parade of community members stepped to the speaker's rostrum to urge the Council to keep the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit intact because of Flinn's valuable work. According to Mid-City Heights resident Maria Cortez, "Chandani has helped our community by using the partnership with law enforcement officers and community groups to create a responsive justice system that meets our needs as a community."

Deputy City Attorney Flinn received her law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law. She joined the City Attorney's Office in 1998. After doing general misdemeanor prosecution, she was assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit before moving to NPU. Flinn is highly regarded by her colleagues. "Chandani and I started in the same "newbie" class in 1998," said Deputy City Attorney Mia Severson. "The class, which consisted of many experienced attorneys, embraced Chandani as an idealist. Chandani's assignment to the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit was, and remains, a perfect place for Chandani to transform her ideas for making a better community into a reality." For her innovative work in the community, this year the San Diego Mediation Center recognized Deputy City Attorney Flinn with its prestigious Peacemaker Award.

Flinn was born in Calcutta, India and is fluent in Bengali. She is married to Jared Flinn who is also an attorney. Both are animal lovers and enjoy traveling.

Prosecutor of the year Judy Taschner received her law degree from McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific, in 1998. After serving as a deputy district attorney in Santa Clara County, Taschner joined the City Attorney's Office in the spring of 2001. Her record of accomplishment as a trial attorney in the Child Abuse/Domestic Violence Unit is truly impressive. First and foremost, Taschner works to ensure victims

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in her cases are safe. In four noteworthy cases, the defendants received a total of twelve years in jail.

In one case, an abuser who constantly harassed his ex-wife, threatened violence, and sent obscene faxes was found guilty of fifty-four charges. The judge sentenced the defendant, who had no previous criminal record, to six years in jail. In another case, which involved six counts of domestic violence, the abuser was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in jail. In a third case, the defendant, who was found guilty of child molest and spousal abuse, is serving one year in jail. And in the fourth case, the defendant hit an eight-year-old boy, assaulted the youngster's father, and destroyed their apartment. The abuser, a relative of the victims, is now serving two-and-a-half years in jail.

Currently, in partnership with the San Diego Police Department, Deputy City Attorney Taschner is developing a curriculum on teen relationship violence that she and others in law enforcement will use for training high school students in the San Diego City Schools District. The students will be taught how to recognize the first symptoms of relationship violence, how to protect oneself from it, and the legal consequences of violating the law.

"Judy's work in the community and with law enforcement embodies the vision of our City Attorney. Judy establishes and maintains positive ties between our office and those we serve," said Timothy Campen, head of the City Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit. "I consistently hear from the community, schools, victims, and law enforcement about how Judy's hard work and dedication is making a real difference for the better in so many ways."

Taschner is a supervisor in the Child Abuse/Domestic Violence Unit and oversees the City's Teen Court program. In Teen Court, students who commit first-time misdemeanor crimes have their cases heard, and are sentenced, by their peers. In the last school year, Taschner helped expand the program, training more than 1,500 students in ten different schools throughout the city. Recently, the Grand Jury issued a report on juvenile diversion programs commending Teen Court for its work.

Taschner is an avid beach volleyball player. Four years ago, she met her husband, Lance, at a volleyball tournament in Mexico. He is a native San Diegan and the reason she moved to San Diego. Taschner is also an active volunteer with the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Deputy City Attorneys Flinn and Taschner were selected for their honors by the San Diego City Attorney's Leadership Team, which chose the winners from an outstanding group of Criminal Division prosecutors nominated by colleagues, law enforcement officers, and community members. In 1998, the City

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Attorney established the Prosecutor of the Year Award. The award recognizes the deputy city attorney whose professional accomplishments and abilities and whose contributions to the community best demonstrate and fulfill the mission of the City Attorney's Criminal Division. The Criminal Division provides legal services to the public with professionalism, integrity, and excellence, focusing on (1) aggressive, just, and effective prosecution; (2) early intervention and proactive lawyering; and (3) promoting public awareness of legal issues affecting the people of San Diego.

The Mayor and the San Diego City Council commended Deputy City Attorneys Flinn and Taschner, proclaiming the day in their honor.

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